The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

Fresh Air People in Town

Have you got it—the fresh air fad? Everybody that one knows of has it. And woe betide the unwary guest that prefers a civilized and Christian bed to the howling blasts of winter that prance on the sleeping-porch. Some hostesses are polite, and you are not actually forced to sleep out-of-doors—unless you want to—but the good of the nation and the charms of snow on your cheeks and rain in your face are continually dinged in your ears.

Personally, I adore a nice breeze warranted draft-proof, and it pleasures my soul to be frightened in mine inner consciousness by the sight of my own muslin curtains waving long white arms toward my bed; but—and it is a big but, with every letter long and unalluring—to sleep shrouded as for the grave, with inverted pillow slips on one's head and a possible tent or two to keep out the elements and the "cauld blast" is not in the least charming. Nor yet do we belong to the fast-fading and almost extinct class of women who crack their one window a noble two inches, and have been known to close that in very big frosts. Of such a woman has been told a charming bit. When remonstrated with on the lack of ventilation in her room at night, she exclaimed: "But the night air will come in!" "And pray, madam, what kind of air do you expect to have at night?" responded the person whose business it probably was to state facts.

In these days of the big fight against tuberculosis and such, the sleeping-porch is fast becoming a part of every household, and it is not uncommon to view the most unsightly and queer looking excrescences on the roofs and fire-escapes of all of your neighbors and all of your neighbors' friends. It is grand for the complexion, and one is so healthy, and all that, but it does seem so dreadfully camped out and uncivilized and so far departed from the curtains of our grandmother's tester bed! So write us, those who sleep out, not as simple-minded and far departed from the truth, but merely the sleepers-in.

Tied Table Mats.

The latest table mat, which some of the deft fingered sisterhood are making for Christmas, is, like many new things, not new at all, but a revival of the old-fashioned tied mat. There is no more reliable protector of tables against the disfiguring marks left by hot dishes than one of these tied mats, as they are soft, thick and non-conducting. Moreover, their enduring qualities are marvelous—there is simply no wear out t o them—and they require no ironing, just a little pulling out of the fringe after a thorough drying.

A set of ordinary wooden slate frames in three sizes, six balls of white cotton and a tape needle is all the paraphernalia required. Select slates with frames that approximate the following sizes: 9 by 12 inches, 10 by 8 inches, 8 1-2 by 6 inches. Remove the pieces of slate and wind the largest frame with any standard white knitting cotton. No. 4 is a good size. Wind in sets of five strands, the shortest way of the frame first, then turn the frame and wind sets at right angles. On the largest frame wind twenty-two sets of strands the short way, and fifteen sets the long way. The middle size is wound in sets of eighteen and thirteen, and the smallest size in sets of sixteen and ten. Do not break the thread, but wind continuously. See how long a working thread will be required to work across the frame on a mat of given size, and cut all the working threads for that mat of the same length. A working thread is required for each set of strands that run across—on the outside—after a mat is wound ready for tying.

All the tying is done in a straight line on the wrong side of the mat. With the threaded tape needle the tying itself is a simple matter, and is done where the sets of strands cross each other, working from right to left. Put the threaded needle in the first hole and bring it out diagonally across the sets of crossing strands, throwing the thread around the needle as it comes up in a twisted loop that ties a knot as it is pulled tight, drawnwork fashion. The needle is then put in and brought up again so as to make a stitch on the lower (afterward the right) side that exactly crosses the first one, tying the same sort of knot again. This secures each set of crossing strands with two firm knots. That is all there is to it. The effect will be that of a series of "cross stitches" on the right side at each "junction."

Whe a row has been tied all across the frame, take a fresh thread and start at the right hand side again. When all the rows are finished, cut the threads evenly along the outside of the slate frame. This will leave a nice, deep frige on all four sides.

Who can think of a more acceptable gift for the housewife than a set of these mats? And it is really the simplest thing in the world to make them, even though the instructions do sound intricate. Once the slate frame is wound with cotton, the method of tying is almost obvious. One accustomed to the work can easily tie a set of mats in a day, but, of course, most women will prefer to do the work at odd moments. The mats are just the thing for pick-up work, as they do not require close attention and do not tax the eyesight. The cotton usually costs 5 cents a ball, or 90 cents for a box of twenty balls, enough for three sets and a couple of mats over.

For Tailored Skirts.

If you would profit by the example of French tailors, you will order separate skirts of one of the following materials:

First, a double-faced cloth that has leaped into important place is being used. It practically trims itself, and will be very popular for thos economical reason.

Then there are cheviots and serges for lightweight models, and all colors are in vogue, the neutral shades and dark blue leading.

Heavy fancy suitings are very popular. The English tweeds and mixed suitings are having a tremendous favoritism shown them by the leading houses.

Tailored skirts are not so straight in outline, many showing slashed effects at the side, and all are made walking length.

Some have a slightly raised waistband, so that no belt is needed, while others show a normal line, with a stitched band attached to the skirt. On others a back panel is attached, with a modified front edge that extends toward the front, thus forming a belt or girdle.

L'Art de la Mode.

Victorian Evening Gowns for Debutantes

Smart Frocks and Coats for Young Gilrs Are Exceptionally Good.

Evening gowns for debutantes this season are symbolic of ingenuousness, of simplicity, of early days and other manners. They make one think of "Pomander Walk," the play that made a sucess in America last year. They breathe sentimental ideas and are linked to romance.

But this is not an age of lavender or heliotrope, not a time of blushes and coy looks and worshipful attitude toward the male sex. Just how our girls will look in the frilled and flounced taffetas of a generation when that attitude and those mannerisms were in fashion is a problem that will only be solved by the girls and the gowns together.

It is not strictly new to have evening gowns of changeable taffeta, and yet we have had so few of them since since Paris started the idea that it is probable they will be reckoned among the novelties. Empire green, with shadings of gray or blue, gray with tones of pink, white with splashes of blue showing as one walks—these are the new changeable taffetas out of which are made fascinating frocks.

One of the best models shows yards of box-plaited ruching pinked on the edges and festooned around the skirt and bodice. The skirt itself clears the ground by an inch, is slashed at the side to show a petticoat of cream-colored lace lined with flesh pink chiffon, and the trimming is of the ruching put on in four rows, following different lines.

The blouse, to which the skirt is gathered an inch above the waist line, is made on a simple round pattern and covered with an immense fichu of cream-colored lace caught at the waist, back and front, with tarnished roses. The waist line is finished with a band of ruching, and the sleeves, which are half way to elbow, hang straight over a full sleeve of cream lace that is snugly gathered in to fit the wrist. This is a dinner and theatre gown, and is made in changeable pink taffeta which has tones of gray in it.

The odd light blue that Boucher used in his wide-flung garlands painted to please the Marquise de Pompadour at Versailles is back in fashion in these taffetas, and they are made with fichus of white tulle and caught with tiny pink rosebuds.

On some of them are broad sashes laid in flat folds, edged with ruchings and arranged at the back in the flat bows with long ends. Whatever one's choice, there is no doubt that these quaint little Victorian gowns will be at the very top of fashion when the debutante's season begins. They are so fitted to her needs; they express youth so much better than did the Babylonian gowns of last year and the Byzantine gowns of the year before.

Girls of eighteen years old, supposed to know nothing of the world, making their first appearance in it wearing the blood-red spangles and the painted gauzes of the days of Jezebel were not artistic. A young face is better framed in the crisp little silks with their simple trimmings and their fichus, even if they express a demureness which we have not.

Topcoats are made of reversible cloth in two tones of blue, in black and white, which is very smart; in gray and blue, in black and red, and in purple and red. The reversible side is used for the collar and cuffs, and most of the new ones are made in such a way that they can be worn with either color outermost. Canary yellow is a prime favorite because it is rather new, and it is particularly well liked by girls. It combines well with elephant gray.

Designs by Drecoll

From the well-konwn house of Drecoll there come four lovely models which will form the inspiration of many a trousseau this fall.

First there is a wonderful little house dress of changeable red-and-silver taffeta. There is a fichu of gray net edged with a fine quilling of fringed silk. This fastens at front under a cabochon of frayed or fringed taffeta. The sleeves are half length and edged with a wide ruching of silk, corded in two rows through the centre. The skirt is fuller, but straight, and is edged with a wide ruching, a large silk rosette trimming the front.

A sash edged with the quilling finishes the lovely and simple frock.

For a dinner gown there is a combination of white mousseline de soie and silver lace. There is a tunic of the latter that entirely covers the bodice and sleeves. Below the velvet girdle of brilliant orange a long peplum drops at the left and swings over in a slanting line at the back. A ruching of white satin ribbon trims the top of three folds at the lower part of the skirt.

For evening there is shown yellow satin in a soft, heavy quality. Over the bodice, which is a high girdle of metallic lace in gold, is draped a fichu of rich ecru lace. There are no sleeves except a little drapery of maline.

A tunic of heavy embroidered lace hangs in a straight line at the back and crosses over at the front in a slanting line.

Over this can be thrown a wonderful evening robe that is a mass of embroidery. This "manteau de soir" is of dull gray satin, double faced, its inner surface being a velvet-stripped pattern in gray and gold. The material in itself is gorgeous. On the outer surface there are a deep hem and bands of embroidery in green and gold. The flowers are conventional and are reminiscent of the Middle Ages. The loose sleeves show no armholes and are caught together by heavy cord ornaments.

Surely the whole offering emphasizes beauty of line, materials and colorings.

Operas Promised for the Coming New York Season

A Musical Critic Writing of the Coming Operas Has Much to Say of Interest to Musical People.

Jove laughs at lovers' perjuries; the patrons of our opera smile at managers' promises. Long before the catalogue of winter fashions in the lyric drama is issued in the fall the subscribers who have endured have preempted their seats, and the few who have died have been replaced by those who have eagerly waited for their operatic shoes. So that the readings of the prospectus is an amusing rather than a serious occupation. Monday's subscribers are much more concerned about the number of times that Caruso or Farrar will sing than what operas they will be heard and seen in. So little heed need be paid to providing novelties for them, though Miss Farrar, at least, has shown a reasonable willingness to add to the current list. Birth, training, taste and ambition have all co-operated in her case to make her the idol of all classes instead of a single contingent of the Metropolitan clientele, for she can and does sing German, French and Italian as occasion requires, and some day will no doubt let her admirers hear how the English language will sound coming from her throat. Signor Caruso belongs to the class of singers whose personal popularity more frequently stands in the way of the enrichment of the repertory than otherwise, and when he does add to it there is sometimes more reason to congratulate the composer and publisher than the public—as witness "Germania" and "La Fanciulla del West." This year there is little likelihood of his divergence from the old rut.

Doubt surrounds sofe of the novelsibilities because of the conditions under which opera is given here—the many performances, the unwillingness of eminent singers to learn new parts, the indifference of the public to new works, growing out of the excessive fondness for the singer rather than the song; the demand of the subscribers for special nights, that they shall all be treated alike, and other factors in the problem which are more vexatious to the mangerial mind than is generally known.

Signor Gatti-Casazza has already confessed that the American novelty the "Mona" of Professor Parker and Mr. Hooker, which was promised early in the season, will be a late production instead, and has taken "Cristoforo Colombo" out of the certain list and placed it among the probabilities, or, rather, possibilities. Thus far the emphatic assurances have gone only to one opera in the German and one in the Italian list—to Thuille's "Lobetanz" and Wolf-Ferrari's "Donne Curiose." The choice of the former was no doubt due to the same spirit that gave the Metropolitan such works as "Hansel und Gretel," "Konigskinder" and "Die Verkaufte Braut"—works which have the quality of permanency. The lovers of German opera are more ready to accept new works than the lovers of Caruso. So of the German novelties with which experiments have been made during the last half dozen years more have been successful than have failed, which cannot be said of the Italian novelties. The German contingent in the company being also more willing to study new works, it was only in the proper order of things that Signor Gatti should have cast around last summer for something attractive to offer to the German contingent in the Metropolitan audiences. He seems to have been led to choose "Lobetanz" by admiration for its merits, which are proved by the fact that the opera has endured fifteen years on the German stage.

Something New to Do

Why do you suppose there are so very few small little pleasures to amuse people here? It is the comment of every visitor that comes. There is not enough to do. Richmond is a great big place and there are lots and lots of people that have time and money to do all these novel little things in off hours, but nobody starts anything; perhaps even if they did nothing would result.

In Baltimore several years ago a very smart woman with one eye on prospects and possibilities and the other on the public, namely, society, opened a tea room. Of course it was run on a very small scale at first and she had to borrow lots of money to begin with, but it has come to be one of the very fashionable little places in Baltimore, and the girl who started it has not only made a name, but quite a comfortable living. People walking or driving in the afternoon like a cozy place to drop in for tea and muffins, where they will in all probability meet a lot of other people they know, and it's nice and amusing and harmless and it makes money and we need one.

Of course every Lent somebody with a big, charitable heart and a real worthy charity behind the thought and a lot of pretty girls to serve you tea has tea for the forty penetential days, but we need a sure enough permanent one, where you can complain if your tea is cold and you don't like the jam. And then to be sure they say Richmond is not a tea-drinking town, and there would be all sorts of obstacles in the way of success. It has been told of two very delightful Richmond girls when taken out to tea one afternoon that they fluffed their hair and looked out of the window and took lobster Newberg. Thus it is always.

But think what a lovely thing it would be, and so long as one can't go down to prosperity for leading big movements, writing great books and inventing sewing machines, how much nicer to be complacent in the fact that you have supplied a need and made so many people cozy for the same amount of dollars and cents it takes to buy one's winter wardrobe.

You have no idea the firms and big wholesale concerns that would be ready to back the idea and help you make something out of it and other people would be interested simply because it is something new and will so happily amuse so many people in such a charming way.

Comments on Coats.

It is good news that a "cruel brother has spoken out boldly against the loud plaid coats cut from steamer rugs with which the fair sex at Newport and Narragansett have covered themselves this season. When a thing is so bad that the lords of creation think it incumbent upon them to protest, it is not likely to live long.

This particular lord was being entertained by three ladies in rugs beside the sea.

Said the one in black and white to the one in scarlet, green and royal blue:

"Your colors, my dear, are what might be called 'firmly expressed.'"

"I don't care," was the answer, "it is the latest thing out, and is smart, even if it is noisy."

'Besides," echoed the sister of the man, the slim girl in the purple and yellow foot-wide plaid, "it's so comfortable! I can sit on the damp sand all I want to now without catching cold."

To this the cruel brother replied: 'You're getting old, or you wouldn't think of wet sand or be willing to give up your good looks for comfort's sake. You look like a Broadway bear in that rig. It is too loud even to be sporty."

Thereupon the three maids betook themselves home, and the next time they went out with the man they wore neat little blue serge suits.

A Wedding Gown.

Margaine-Lacroix has given us an exquisite model of a toilette de marlee, which will be copied largely this fall by all lovers of the beautiful and the simple.

It is of white satin, made plain in the skirt. The long train is folded at one side in five thicknesses of material and caught near the edge under a bunch of white roses and leaves.

The bodice is of white tulle, with a fichu effect of duchess lace on one side and the surplice idea on the other. The folds of satin are crossed over at the waist line and are continued around the girdle. The long sleeves are of tulle and the high collar is edged with satin.

With this is a caplike adornment of tulle for the hair, with a tiny line of roses forming an edge. The veil is folded over it and falls in soft, crisp folds at each side to the hem of the dress. The Parisian bride no longer walks up the aisle with a veil concealing her face. It is now a real factor of the beauty of the whole costume.

Sleeves Are Long.

The most interesting single feature about the new gowns is the defined armhole and the long sleeve that hugs the lower part of the arm and shows a tendency to fullness over the elbow.

The three-quarter sleeve, the kimono, and the tight-elbow one have had their day. There is a new square sleeve that is very effective, but hard to describe. It belongs to handsome wraps more than to gowns, though one sometimes sees it in thin blouses.

Ruffles over the wrist are again here to add to our anxieties and increase our laundry bill. They are important features of the simplest wash blouse, and appear on the ornate suit bodice of tarnished laces and filet laces.

All sleeves fit snugly at the wrist, whether on coat, blouse, or frock. They are buttoned through to do it. The crux of the situation, as far as I have seen it, is that your new suit and one-piece frock of last autumn—the late autumn—will do for this year, but you will have to cut over many sleeves, wear high collars and lengthen the waist line. And if your skirt have a curved seam at the back, add drapery.

Above all, don't be afraid of drapery and begin now to buy fringe by the wholesale.

Tomato Sandwiches.

Thoroughly chill a number of good-sized tomatoes, slice, and marinate in French dressing. Just before serving, drain and put together, sandwich fashion, with a filling of shredded lettuce and minced boiled fish, moistened with mayonnaise. Arrange each sandwich on a small paper doily; top each with a spoonful of mayonnaise and a slice of stuffed olive, and garnish with crisp lettuce leaves.